

constantly on the lookout for *Phyllonorycter* mines. A few mines on hornbeam and elm had been picked when I came across a large holm-oak. This whole tree was infested with *P. messaniella*, each leaf containing on average half a dozen pale blotch mines making it very unsightly. On moving closer I noticed that the tree was alive with myriads of *messaniella* adults flying freely around the branches. There must have been many hundreds, a fascinating sight in the autumn sunshine. Interestingly, none of the nearby normal oaks, some only yards away, sported any such number of mines, although when gathered, *messaniella* did emerge from some of these on the ensuing days.

A curious observation on the holm oak was that not a single pupa case could be seen protruding from any of the mines — a small exit hole being all to show for a vacated mine. The usual habit in this group is for the empty pupa case to protrude for at least a short time until dislodged by tree movement. This was extremely calm weather, however, I assume the coarse texture of the holm-oak leaf prevented egression of the pupa case — DR. I. A. WATKINSON, 2, Fairleas, Sittingbourne, Kent.

THYMELICUS LINEOLA OCHSENHEIMER (ESSEX SKIPPER) IN THE COUNTY OF AVON.—It is worthy of note that this interesting little butterfly is still maintaining a precarious existence in North Somerset, now the new county of Avon.

Turner in "Lepidoptera of Somerset" (1955) records it in the Taunton district "many years ago" (*The Victoria County History of Somerset*), also at Hinton Charterhouse in 1947 and 1952 (J. A. J. Smith). In 1972 I again recorded a small colony in the Hinton Charterhouse/Wellow area. The habitat is a rough hillside pasturage with a good calcareous flora and much rough grass, especially *Phleum pratense* (Cats-tail grass), *Agropyron repens* (Couch), and *Briza media* (Common quaking grass). This small area holds strong colonies of *Erynnis tages* Linn. (Dingy Skipper), *Pyrgus malvae* Linn. (Grizzled Skipper), *Ochlodes venata* Linn. (Large Skipper) and *Thymelicus sylvestris* Poda (Small Skipper), the latter flying with *lineola* and making identification difficult.

I have made extensive searches around Bath over a number of years but this is the only colony which I have been able to locate. Strangely enough, despite the fact that 1973 was an excellent butterfly year, *lineola* was very difficult to find in this area. — BRYAN W. MOORE, Church Cottage, Batheaston, Bath.

STENEPTERYX HIRUNDINIS (L.).—On the 30th of September, I came across a young house martin (*Delichon urbica*) sitting forlornly in the middle of the footway. I picked it up and brought it home, about a quarter of a mile, but it seemed to take no interest in being handled and sat quietly all the time. When I reached home, while showing it to my wife, a specimen of the blood-sucking fly *Stenepteryx hirundinis* (L.) dropped

into my hand. Shortly afterwards, the bird seemed to show a little more interest in life and I placed it on a window cill out of reach of cats, and left it. In a short time it was gone, and a search below the window showed that it had not just dropped to the ground.

Some years ago, when my daughter was a schoolgirl, she brought in a blackbird which she had picked up in the garden, and from which a specimen of *S. hirundinis* dropped. This bird, too, showed signs of returning interest in life, and shortly afterwards it flew away.

These two cases leave me wondering whether this unpleasant looking insect does inject some narcotic into the bird's bloodstream while feeding. — S. N. A. JACOBS, 54, Hayes Lane, Bromley, Kent BR2 9EE, 2.x.1974.

DIARSIA ? FLORIDA (SCHMIDT) AND XANTHORHOE MUNITATA (HUBNER) IN SWALEDALE. — I stayed four nights, 28th to 31st July 1974, above Keld, at the head of Swaledale in Yorkshire North Riding. The house was on the 1,500 feet contour, with a wet, newly cut hayfield in front and moorland pasture behind; it was very exposed, and the weather was vile. The moth trap gave only 23 species, but two were of interest.

On 30th and 31st there were five fresh examples of a *Diarsia* species which I should like to call *D. florida* Schmidt because of their large size, pale pinkish colour, and date of capture, which is too early at that altitude for them to belong to a second brood of *D. rubi* Vieweg. They agree closely with my specimens from Inverness-shire, taken at Aviemore in early July and high above Dalwhinnie on 1st August. They also agree with the coloured illustrations of the typical form of *D. florida* from Askham Bog, which is a low level Yorkshire locality (*Ent. Gaz.*, 2:71 and Plate 1). But *D. florida* was introduced by Cockayne in 1950 as essentially a *fen* insect, as its present English name, Fen Square Spot, indicates. I am not sure if it is right to attach these montane and Highland insects to it, despite their similar appearance and single-brooded character; or whether it is not better to regard them, and perhaps the fen *D. florida* as well, as biological races of *D. rubi*. Comment would be welcome.

Three specimens of *Xanthorhoe munitata* also entered the trap, in all of which the usual pink central band was missing, the area between its defining lines being silvery grey like the rest of the forewing. Unfortunately, I thought that the first two were merely rain-washed, and released them; but the one which I kept is perfectly fresh. Since I saw none of the typical form this variant may be the local race. — R. F. BRETHERTON, Folly Hill, Birtley Green, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0LE.

THREE NOTABLE MICROLEPIDOPTERA AT BLACKHEATH, N.W. KENT. — *Apomyelois neophanes* Durr.: I was much surprised to find that a dark Phycitid which came to my m.v. lamp on 21.vi.59 could only be this very local insect. As its larval